

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An exposure control apparatus which determines an exposure value based on the luminance of a photographic screen and performs exposure control based on the determined exposure value, said exposure control apparatus comprising:
 - 5 an area generating unit which divides the photographic screen into a predetermined number of areas;
 - a deciding unit which decides, for each area generated by said area generating unit, whether a main subject having
 - 10 a high luminance exists within that area;
 - an average luminance calculating unit which calculates an average luminance in the area generated by the area generating unit according to the decision result by said deciding unit; and
 - 15 an exposure value determining unit which determines an exposure value based on the average luminance in the area calculated by said average luminance calculating unit.
2. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 1,
 - 20 wherein said deciding unit counts pixels, each having a luminance higher than a predetermined luminance threshold, out of pixels forming the area and decides whether the count value of the high luminance pixels exceeds a predetermined count threshold; and
 - 25 said average luminance calculating unit calculates

the average luminance by using the luminance per se of the high luminance pixel when the deciding unit decides that the high luminance pixel count value exceeds the predetermined count threshold; in contrast, said average
5 luminance calculating unit substitutes a predetermined low luminance smaller than the predetermined luminance threshold for the luminance of the high luminance pixel so as to calculate the average luminance when the deciding unit decides that the high luminance pixel count value is equal
10 to or smaller than the predetermined count threshold.

3. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a parameter table which stores therein a plurality of parameter groups, each of which includes the
15 luminance threshold, the count threshold and the low luminance,

wherein said deciding unit and said average luminance calculating unit select the parameter group according to an exposure condition.

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4. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the parameter group per area generated by said area generating unit is stored in the parameter table, and said deciding unit and said average luminance calculating unit
25 select the parameter group according to the area generated

by said area generating unit.

5. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3,
wherein said parameter table stores the plurality of low
5 luminances in the parameter groups, and said average
luminance calculating unit selects the low luminance
according to the high luminance pixel count value.

6. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 4,
10 wherein said parameter table stores the plurality of low
luminances in the parameter groups, and said average
luminance calculating unit selects the low luminance
according to the high luminance pixel count value.

15 7. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3,
wherein said parameter table stores the plurality of count
thresholds in the parameter groups, and said deciding unit
selects the count value according to the exposure condition.

20 8. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 4,
wherein said parameter table stores the plurality of count
thresholds in the parameter groups, and said deciding unit
selects the count value according to the exposure condition.

9. An exposure control apparatus comprising:

an area generating unit which divides a screen into a predetermined number of areas;

a deciding unit which decides in which area of the

5 screen a subject having a high luminance is included;

an average luminance calculating unit which calculates an average luminance in that area of the screen which said deciding unit decides as including the subject; and

an exposure value determining unit which determines

10 an exposure based on the average luminance calculated by said average luminance calculating unit.

10. An exposure control method which determines an exposure value based on the luminance of a photographic

15 screen and performs exposure control based on the determined exposure value, said exposure control apparatus comprising:

an area generating step which divides the photographic screen into a predetermined number of areas;

a deciding step which decides, for each area generated

20 by said area generating step, whether a main subject having a high luminance exists within that area;

an average luminance calculating step which calculates an average luminance in the area generated by the area generating step according to the decision result by said

25 deciding step; and

an exposure value determining step which determines an exposure value based on the average luminance in the area calculated by said average luminance calculating step.

5 11. The exposure control method according to claim 10, wherein said deciding step counts pixels, each having a luminance higher than a predetermined luminance threshold, out of pixels forming the area and decides whether the count value of the high luminance pixels exceeds a predetermined
10 count threshold; and

 said average luminance calculating step calculates the average luminance by using the luminance per se of the high luminance pixel when the deciding step decides that the high luminance pixel count value exceeds the
15 predetermined count threshold; in contrast, said average luminance calculating step substitutes a predetermined low luminance smaller than the predetermined luminance threshold for the luminance of the high luminance pixel so as to calculate the average luminance when the deciding step
20 decides that the high luminance pixel count value is equal to or smaller than the predetermined count threshold.